What Is Cla Is:

1. A method for treating or detecting in a patient rapidly growing cells of exogenous origin that preferentially accumulate a photoactivatable porphyrin, comprising the steps of administering to said patient, or contacting said cells, with an effective amount of a precursor of protoporphyrin IX such that said exogenous cells accumulate therapeutic or detectable levels of said protoporphyrin IX, and thereafter exposing said cells to light capable of photoactivating said protoporphyrin IX.

2. The method of claim 1, in which the cells of exogenous origin are selected from the group consisting of *Protista* and parasites.

3. The method of claim 1, in which the precursor of protoporphyrin IX is 5-aminolevulinic acid, and the method is performed *in vivo* or *ex vivo*.

4. A method for treating or detecting in a patient rapidly growing *Protista* cells that preferentially accumulate a photoactivatable porphyrin, comprising the steps of administering to said patient, or contacting said cells, with an effective amount of a precursor of protoporphyrin IX such that said *Protista* cells accumulate therapeutic or detectable levels of said protoporphyrin IX, and thereafter exposing said cells to light capable of photoactivating said protoporphyrin IX.

5. The method of claim 1 or claim 4 for the treatment of rapidly growing exogenous cells located in or on the skin, which comprises the application of an effective amount of 5-aminolevulinic acid in or on the skin.

6. The method of claim 1, for the treatment of malignant and non-malignant hyperproliferative lesions.

7. The method of claim 4, for the treatment of lesions resulting from infectious agents.

8. A method for treating or detecting in a patient rapidly growing parasite cells that preferentially accumulate a photactivatable porphyrin, comprising the steps of administering to said patient, or contacting said cells, with an effective amount of a precursor of protoporphyrin IX such that said parasite cells accumulate therapeutic or detectable levels of said protoporphyrin IX, and thereafter exposing said cells to light capable of photoactivating said protoporphyrin IX.

9. The method of claim 2, used for the treatment of fungal infections.

10. The method of claim 4, used for the teatment of fungal infections.